

**We Claim:**

1. A method for accessing data in a server-based business database system using an external program, the method comprising:

instantiating a company object as an instance of a company class conforming to a component object model standard to access data in a server-based business database system;

setting a server property of said company object to a server name containing said business database;

setting a company name property of said company object to the name of said business database;

setting a user name property of said company object to the name of a user;

setting a password property of said company object to a password of said user;

setting a language property of said company object to a desired language of said user;

and

invoking a connect method within said company object, said connect method opening a software connection to said business database.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said setting a server property of said company object to a server name comprises setting said server property to an input server name.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein said setting a server property of said company object to a server name comprises setting said server property to a default server name from the company object, if the server property is not set.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein said invoking a connect method within said company object, said connect method opening a software connection to a desired company database comprises connecting an external data warehouse management system to said business database.

5. The method of claim 1 further comprising accessing said business database using business objects from said company object.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein said business objects expose a plurality of methods for accessing said business database.

7. The method of claim 5 wherein said accessing said business database using said business objects comprises updating said business database.

8. The method of claim 5 wherein said accessing said business database using said business objects comprises retrieving data from said business database.

9. The method of claim 5 wherein said accessing said business database using said business objects comprises manipulating data from said business database.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
invoking a disconnect method within said company object to close said software connection to said desired company database.

11. A machine-readable medium having stored thereon a plurality of executable instructions to perform a method for accessing a server-based business database system comprising:

instantiating a company object as an instance of a company class conforming to a component object model standard to access data in a server-based business database system;

setting a server property of said company object to a server name containing said business database;

setting a company name property of said company object to the name of said business database;

setting a user name property of said company object to the name of a user;

setting a password property of said company object to a desired password;

setting a language property of said company object to a desired language; and

invoking a connect method within said company object, said connect method opening a software connection to said business database.

12. The machine-readable medium of claim 1 wherein setting a server property of said company object to a server name comprises setting said server property to an input server name.

13. The machine-readable medium of claim 1 wherein setting a server property of said company object to a server name comprises setting said server property to a default server name from the company object, if the server property is not set.

14. The machine-readable medium of claim 1 wherein said invoking a connect method within said company object, said connect method opening a software connection to a desired company database comprises connecting an external data warehouse management system to said business database.

15. The machine-readable medium of claim 1 further comprising accessing said business database using business objects from said company object.

16. The machine-readable medium of claim 5 wherein said business objects expose a plurality of methods for accessing said business database.

17. The machine-readable medium of claim 5 wherein said accessing said business database using said business objects comprises updating said business database.

18. The machine-readable medium of claim 5 wherein said accessing said business database using said business objects comprises retrieving data from said business database.

19. The machine-readable medium of claim 5 wherein said accessing said business database using said business objects comprises manipulating data from said business database.

20. The machine-readable medium of claim 1 further comprising:  
invoking a disconnect method within said company object to close said software connection to said desired company database.

21. A software development kit for providing a data interface to access a business database comprising:

an application programming interface including a plurality of component object model objects and methods; and

a company object for accessing said business database being one of said plurality of component object model objects, said company object being accessible by external development tools to access said plurality of component object model objects and methods.

22. The software development kit of claim 21 wherein said company object comprises:

a plurality of properties including:

- a server property;
- a username property;
- a password property;
- a language property; and
- a company database property.

23. The software development kit of claim 22 wherein said server property comprises:

a name of a database server.

24. The software development kit of claim 22 wherein said username property comprises:

a name of an authorized user.

25. The software development kit of claim 25 wherein said password property comprises:

a password for said authorized user.

26. The software development kit of claim 25 wherein said language property comprises:

a language to be used for said authorized user.

27. The software development kit of claim 22 wherein said company database property comprises:

a name of a company having access to said business database.

28. A machine-readable medium having stored thereon a plurality of executable instructions comprising:

a software development kit for providing a data interface to access a business database, said software development kit including:

an application programming interface including a plurality of component object model objects and methods; and

a company object for accessing said business database being one of said plurality of component object model objects, said company object being accessible by external development tools to access said plurality of component object model objects and methods.

29. The machine-readable medium of claim 28 wherein said company object comprises:

a plurality of properties including:

a *server property*;

a *username property*;

a *password property*;

a *language property*; and

a *company database property*.

30. The machine-readable medium of claim 29 wherein said *server property* comprises:

a name of a database server.

31. The machine-readable medium of claim 29 wherein said *username property* comprises:

a name of an authorized user.

32. The machine-readable medium of claim 31 wherein said *password property* comprises:

a password for said authorized user.

33. The machine-readable medium of claim 31 wherein said *language property* comprises:

a language to be used for said authorized user.

34. The machine-readable medium of claim 29 wherein said company database property comprises:

a name of a company having access to said business database.

35. A data processing system comprising:

means for instantiating a company object as an instance of a company class conforming to a component object model standard to access data in a business database;

means for setting a server property of said company object to a server name containing said business database;

means for setting a company property of said company object to the name of said business database;

means for setting a user name property of said company object to the name of a user;

means for setting a password property of said company object to a desired password;

means for setting a language property of said company object to a desired language;

and

means for invoking a connect method within said company object, said connect method opening a software connection to said business database.

36. The data processing system of claim 35 further comprising:

means for accessing said business database using business objects from said company object.

37. The data processing system of claim 36 wherein said business objects expose a plurality of methods for accessing said business database.

38. The data processing system of claim 36 wherein said accessing said business database using said business objects comprises updating said business database.

39. The data processing system of claim 36 wherein said accessing said business database using said business objects comprises retrieving data from said business database.

40. The data processing system of claim 36 wherein said accessing said business database using said business objects comprises manipulating data from said business database.

41. The data processing system of claim 35 wherein said method further comprises: invoking a disconnect method within said company object to close said software connection to said desired company database.

42. A computer system comprising:  
a processing component;  
a communication component coupled to said processing component;  
a display component coupled to said processing component; and  
an input device coupled to said processing component;  
said processing component including a machine-readable medium having stored thereon a plurality of executable instructions to perform a method including:  
instantiating a company object as an instance of a company class conforming to a component object model standard to access data in a business database;  
setting a server property of said company object to a server name containing said business database;  
setting a company name property of said company object to the name said business database;  
setting a user name property of said company object to the name of a user;  
setting a password property of said company object to a desired password;  
setting a language property of said company object to a desired language; and  
invoking a connect method within said company object, said connect method opening a software connection to said business database.

43. The computer system of claim 42 wherein said processing component comprises:  
a processing unit; and  
a bus coupled to said processing unit, said communication component, said display component and said input device component.

44. The computer system of claim 43 wherein said processing component further comprises:

a random access memory coupled to said processing unit via said bus.

45. The computer system of claim 44 wherein said processing component further comprises:

a mass memory system coupled to said processing unit via said bus.